

THE MORALIST.

Unguibus, et pugnīs, dein fustibus.—HORACE.

Were I empowered to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well loaded fists ;
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue.

COWPER.

No. 9.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 1814.

FOR some days past I have made it my business to hear all that was said about the war, and have listened to a vast many plans for defending the city by land and by sea, as well as a vast many conjectures as to the place where the British would land their forces.

I have found generally no great appetite for war; few pant for honor in the tented field—there are, I fear, more Falstaffs than Norvals among us. I heard some young men however declare, that they hoped the news, that Lord Wellington's army was coming to America, was true, for they wished to show them what sort of stuff republican hearts were

made of—and what an honour, said they, it would be to vanquish the victor? They had not the least doubt, (blessings on their patriotic souls,) but that the conquerors at Talavera, Ciudad-Rodrigo, and Vittoria, would be obliged to bow to our superior prowess.

A young gentleman, who was rather better acquainted with special pleading than with the manual exercise, declared that he should have no objection to fight with men who would stand their ground, for that there was always the greatest danger of getting killed in running away. But as for the Militia, he was sure they would turn their backs at the sight of a gun; and Heaven deliver me, said he, from the havoc which would follow. The soldiers running one against another, and throwing each other down in their hurry to escape, the enemy's cavalry pursuing, cutting and slashing, trampling and mashing. I would rather, said he, have been present at the falling of the Tower of Babel.

I have not observed so good a gout for bloody work in any of the military gentleman, as in certain young physicians, who are anticipating the pleasure of cutting off arms and legs. On mentioning this circumstance at the Club, Sir Harry put on an air of great deliberation, and after about five minutes silence—"My worthy friend" said he:

"I think I can tell you the reason of the great alacrity which you speak of, in the physicians. It is because their part of the battle falls within the line of their profession. As for all the rest, the art of making war is quite a new business to them—and we must expect that they will want confidence. And now" said he, "from this last hint, which our friend the MORALIST has given us, with all due deference, I shall take the liberty to speak more at large, and I humbly hope not without profit.

If every man could play his part in battle with the instruments, utensils, tools and weapons, to which he is most accustomed in time of peace, the employments of peace would then be a preparation for war; and every man would be a soldier without drilling. To secure this desirable advantage, I propose, that in all treaties and contracts with foreign nations, it should be agreed, stipulated, and provided in the most solemn manner, that if either of the two contracting powers should declare war, it should be lawful to use in battle the instruments of each man's trade, mystery, or business, and those only; and I advise, that instructions to that effect be forthwith transmitted to Messrs. Gallatin and Bayard. I am not going into any argument on the utility of my plan—I will just place it in full view before you, and those of you who do not like

it, are allowed liberty of speech; say as much against it as you please.

It should be stipulated that the Doctors might go to battle with crow-bills, fall to it with lances, throw mortars, strike with pestles, cram down physic, cut with saws, gash with knives, thrust with probes, and if any one could get his antagonist fairly on the ground, to prevent his running away, he might amputate a leg.

The Lawyers should attack with narrs, receive with pleas, thrust with replications, parry with rejoinders, strike with surrejoinders, ward off with rebutters, and with surrebutters fairly bring their opponents to the ground. Some people may laugh at this paper warfare, but I can assure them, it would be more serious than they imagine. For my part, I should not like to stand under the descending weight of a chancery bill.

The Tailors should clip ears and noses with their shears, punch with bodkins, prick with needles, and in dreadful extremity, throw red hot geese.

The Shoemakers should scalp with knives, break skulls with hammers, punch with awls, tickle with bristles, break the enemy's lines with lap-stones,

pummel them with boot-trees, and might strap them after they were taken prisoners.

The merchants—but pray in what guise should the Merchants be armed? I can think of no weapon proper for them to use.”

“I can help you out of that difficulty,” said the Colonel. “Let them build breast works and parapets with bills of lading, invoices, and letters from correspondents, and to frighten the enemy, swear great Custom-House oaths.”

“That will do,” said Sir Harry, “and the retailers should be each armed with scissors and yardsticks, and particular care should be taken to see that the latter were of lawful length.

The Farmers, who would constitute the great strength of the army, should be divided into separate corps, according to the tool which each chose to make use of. They should cut with hatchets, hew with broad-axes, thrash with flails, undermine with shovels, hoe up by the feet, maul with beetles, transfix with crow-bars, scratch with rakes, and mow down whole ranks with scythes.”

“In favour of this plan,” said Theodore Precedent, “I am sure that you will have the concu-

rence of all the poets ; for I have no doubt that it would revive the taste for the epic. The reason why the modern epic does not please, is said to be the sameness of modern battles, the uniformity introduced by military discipline, and the lack of single prowess. Men fight in regiments, and not every Hero by himself, as in Homer's time. But if your plan was introduced, what feats of single prowess ! what surprises ! what variety ! The combatants might hold dialogues with one another ; and the phrases peculiar to their different trades would stand in place of the dialects of Homer."

" Well spoken," said Sir Harry, " they will no doubt lend me their assistance to promote my plan, which, if it should be adopted, I should think myself a second Lycurgus. He made all the employments of his Spartans, in peace, a school of preparation for war. The boys were taken at seven years of age, and their daily occupation was athletic exercises and martial sports ; which invigorated their bodies and emboldened their minds for the camp. They slept hard, on beds made of the tops of reeds, to which in winter they added a little thistle down. To teach them the art of foraging, they were pinched in their quantity of food, that thus they might be induced to supply their wants by theft ; for which they were praised if their contrivances were ingenious, but punished if

they conducted so clumsily as to be found out. They were taught to sing good songs, to play on the lyre, and to jest; that by these amusements, they might banish fear and wear away the tediousness of a camp life. For the same reason the art of pleasant and pithy conversation was much cultivated among them. They were taught to desire nothing but the praise of their country; to consider nothing worth labouring for but the safety and glory of Sparta. By such laws did Lycurgus fit his Countrymen for war. My plan is much more simple. I propose to fit *war* to my Countrymen. It must be confessed, however, that there was something in the system of that old hoary-headed Lycurgus, which had a wonderful effect in making his Spartans strong and athletic, healthy and cheerful, as well as noble, fearless, generous and patriotic; and on the whole, to make them as men superior to any thing which my soldiers would be likely to attain to."

"But how will you manage Sir Harry," said I, "if you allow your soldiers the liberty of talking in their single combats? I am afraid you would never make an end of the battle. Lycurgus ordained that his Spartans should express themselves in short pithy sentences. His object probably was that his warriors in their single combats should take up less time in talking, and have more for fighting."

This pregnant mode of expression, that it might always be ready in time of need, they practised even in their ordinary discourse; so that it became natural for a Spartan to express himself sententially. Lycurgus himself set the example. Thus, when he was advised by a person to establish a popular government in Lacedæmon—"Go," said he, "and first make trial of it in thy own family." When a Spartan was asked to go and hear one who imitated the nightingale—"Nay," said he, "but I have heard the nightingale herself." So very sparing were they of words that they even avoided speaking on hypotheses. When Geradas, an ancient Spartan, was asked "what punishment their law appointed for adulterers?" he answered, "my friend, there are no adulterers in our Country." "But what if there should be one?" "Why then," said Geradas, "he must forfeit a bull so large that he may drink of the Eurotas from the top of Mount Taygetus." When the stranger expressed his surprise, and said, "how can such a bull be found?" Geradas answered with a smile, "and how will you find an adulterer in Sparta?"

"I must confess," said Sir Harry, "that this pithy mode of expression would not at all answer for my soldiers, and I would therefore have an article inserted in all the proposed treaties, that no man should be killed till he had finished his speech. If

it should be feared that the politicians would take advantage of this liberty, and talk all night, why then, I answer, they would be ready on the field the next morning. Certes, because some men take nine hundred and ninety-nine times as many words to express their ideas as are necessary, they ought not therefore to be deprived the liberty of speech.

It is to be reckoned a great advantage in the plan I propose, that many tradesmen would be able to carry on their business as well in camp as out of it, which suits well with the industrious habits of our Countrymen, who cannot bear to be absent a moment from their business, and who were doubtless born not to enjoy the fruits of labor, but labor itself. War ought to be as much as possible accommodated to this disposition, and no one should be left idle who can be employed. Lycurgus, to be sure, made his Spartans of a different temper; for tho' they were never idle, spending all their time in improving either their bodies or minds, they despised labour. When a Lacedæmonian, at Athens, was told of a person who was fined because he refused to work, he desired to see the man who had been "condemned for keeping up his dignity." The Spartans indeed lived so temperately that little food sufficed, and even if they had possessed no slaves, but a very small portion of time would have been occupied in raising the elements of their

black broth. Tho' I am no enemy to long life and health, I know the difficulty of counteracting men's dispositions; and since people choose to enfeeble their bodies and shorten their days by excess in labor or eating, or both, I shall not attempt to prevent it.

I would propose, that to organize an army, the different trades should meet, each one by itself, and make trial of their prowess; when he, who could do the most work in a day, should be chosen captain. The captains should then meet, and the field officers be chosen by the same trial of strength and skill, and that man should finally be made general over the whole, who had proved, by his good bargains that he was able to make the most money, and for this reason, that *his* part of the war would consist more in calculation than in fighting.

If we could get such treaties as I propose adopted, I think we should gain the victory over all our enemies; for as it has been often proved, that our people do more work in a given space of time than any other nation on the face of the earth, there is no doubt, that in this way they would do more fighting."

During this discourse, the Alderman said not a word, tho' he now and then smiled at Sir Harry's

pleasant conceits. But the Duke, who also was mute, seemed to sit very uneasy. He turned from side to side in his chair, and shifted his position at least fifteen times, while Sir Harry was speaking. The truth is, the Duke cannot bear to hear any one speak ill of his Country even in jest, and he is ready at any moment to sally forth, Don Quixote like, and to challenge all the world to fight, if all the world does not confess that there is not in all the world a Country so beautiful, and so fertile, and inhabited by a people so wise and so happy, as that which Poets call Columbia, and Politicians the United States. Tho' the Duke is sufficiently sensitive to the vices of individuals, yet the moment you make a thrust at the whole mass, and call them collectively by the names which you had given them one by one, he flies into a violent passion. This sort of language irritates him beyond measure in a foreigner, especially in a Frenchman, or an Englishman ; and the Duke's tender point, as they call it, is now so well known among them, that they would as soon feed hornets as abuse the United States in his presence. From an American, the Duke will hear his Countrymen's failings talked of with comparative patience.

On the present occasion, no sooner had Sir Harry made an end of his discourse, than the Duke very

mildly inquired, "whether he seriously preferred the Constitution of Lacedæmon to that of the United States?"

"Political institutions," said Sir Harry, "are valuable, not only in proportion to the good they produce in a given space of time, but also in proportion to their durability. The laws of Lycurgus continued to be observed for about five hundred years, while our Constitution is not yet thirty years old, and we have become weary of it. Nay, there are many who talk seriously of seceding from the federal compact.

Never did I see such intellectual lightning as streamed from Carroll's eyes. "The wretch who dares to talk so," said he, "deserves to be bastinadoed like a Turk—delivered to the Inquisition like a Spaniard—conscripted and bastiled like a Frenchman—taxed and impressed like an Englishman. This last retreat of Liberty, almost the only real Republic ever known, the largest in extent which ever claimed the name, disgraced as it has been, by political disputes, will never, I trust, be defiled by fratricide blood. I have always thanked Heaven that I was born an American—may I never live to blush at the ejaculation—nor, do I believe that I shall. My countrymen are sound at heart—they are brave. Should a powerful army be landed on

our shores, should the fearful attempt ever be made, of destroying the free institutions and crushing the lofty spirit of the States, how would that spirit waken from the dreams of avarice and the stupefaction of luxury, like the lion from his slumber. I would ask no more honourable death, than to fall as a private in the ranks by the side of men who would fight, in such a struggle, as would my Countrymen.

Nor, let the reader suppose, that the Duke would fail in the proof. If there is a man, who, aloof from all party prejudices and attachments, loves his country for her own sake—if there is a man whose fortune, whose soul, whose life is hers, ~~that~~ that man is Carroll.